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- ART. VIII.—1. *Life of Jesus. A Manual for Academic Study.* By DR. CARL HASE, Professor of Theology in the University of Jena. Translated from the German of the Third and Fourth Improved Editions, by JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE. Boston: Walker, Wise, & Co. 1860. 12mo. pp. 267.
2. *The Life of Jesus, critically examined.* By DR. DAVID FRIEDRICH STRAUSS. Translated from the Fourth German Edition, by MARIAN EVANS, Translator of Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*. New York: Calvin Blanchard. 1856. 8vo. pp. 901.
3. *Christ in History.* By ROBERT TURNBULL, D. D., Author of "Genius of Scotland," "Pulpit Orators of France and Switzerland," "Life Pictures from a Pastor's Note-Book," etc. New and Revised Edition. Boston: Gould and Lincoln. 1860. 12mo. pp. 540.
4. *Disquisitions and Notes on the Gospels.—Matthew.* By JOHN H. MORISON. Boston: Walker, Wise, & Co. 1860. 12mo. pp. 538.
5. *Illustrations of Scripture; suggested by a Tour through the Holy Land.* By HORATIO B. HACKETT, D. D., Professor of Biblical Literature in Newton Theological Institution. New and Revised Edition. Boston: Gould and Lincoln. 1860. 12mo. pp. 354.

THE assaults upon Christianity and its records never leave tokens of even partial success; their only enduring memorials are to be found in added buttresses at the points of attack. Many of the richest departments of religious literature owe their existence, in which unborn generations will rejoice, to transient and obsolete phases of infidelity, so that the opposers of the truth have unwittingly raised up for it defenders and interpreters, and have brought into clearer view the elements of its beauty, strength, and grandeur. Such has been the consequence of the bold onslaught made upon historical Christianity by Strauss's *Life of Jesus*; and we avail ourselves of the appearance of Hase's work in Mr. Clarke's Translation to review the theory, which, in common with so many other re-

cent works, it is designed to refute.* It is, indeed, a late period for us to take our first distinct cognizance of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*; but we have reason to believe that this book is constantly passing into the hands of fresh readers, and, while it probably makes few disciples, is creating no small amount of scepticism and unbelief as regards the facts recorded in our canonical Gospels.

The theory which bears the name of Strauss could hardly have originated anywhere but in Germany; nor is it easy for a well-ordered Anglo-Saxon mind to conceive of its being seriously propounded and actually believed. It is far from being clearly defined and self-consistent in the author's own statement; and his *Life of Jesus*, while a work of great learning in detail, is singularly deficient in comprehensiveness and unity. To one aim only is it true, and that is the undermining of every statement in the Gospels which would make them the authentic history of a God-born teacher and a supernatural revelation.

The theory, in brief, is this. Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary. In his childhood he manifested unusual intelligence and promise, as compared with his external advantages, and was the object of admiration in the humble family circle in which his lot was cast. He early became a disciple of John the Baptist, and, sympathizing at first with John's fervent expectation of the speedy advent of the Messiah, he soon conceived the idea of assuming that character, and personated it so successfully as to become his own dupe, thus passing unconsciously from venial imposture to sincere enthusiasm as a reformer and innovator. He made proselytes, chose disciples, and uttered discourses which impressed themselves profoundly upon the popular mind, and drew upon him the hostility of the chief men of the nation, especially of the Pharisees. They procured his execution as a traitor. He perhaps only swooned from loss of blood, and the story of his resurrection may have had a basis of fact. If he died, the story of his resurrection

* The first edition of Hase's work was published before the appearance of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*; but after the publication of the last-named work, Hase so entirely reconstructed his *Life of Jesus* as to give it throughout an aspect of having been written with special reference to Strauss's theory.

was of later date; and in either case, it would have naturally connected with itself that of his ascension to heaven. After his death, many marvellous incidents concerning his life gradually gained currency. Some of these were the spontaneous outgrowth of popular credulity; others were symbolical forms in which his disciples sought to embody the doctrines and precepts which had formed the staple of his discourses. His miraculous birth was invented and believed, because it seemed impossible that the Messiah should have been born like other men. Supernatural works were ascribed to him, because they had been attributed in the Hebrew legends to the ancient prophets; and it was indispensable that he who was greater than they, and of whom they were thought to have written glowing predictions, should have performed more numerous and more marvellous miracles than any of them. His appearances after his resurrection — if it be admitted that he died — were fabricated to meet the improbability that he should have returned to life without having been seen. These wonderful stories were circulated orally among his disciples for half a century or more, and were during the lapse of those years both magnified and multiplied. After a while different persons — none of them his immediate disciples — compiled such narratives as had reached their ears; and of these compilations there have come down to us our four Gospels (which were written not far from the close of the first century), together with other fragmentary works of equal authority, commonly called the Apocryphal Gospels.

This theory admits, as our readers perceive, a slender thread of actual history, on which are strung an unwieldy and incongruous cluster of myths. But how are we to distinguish between facts and myths? First, Strauss knows, and so does every philosophic interpreter, that the observed order of Nature has never been suspended or superseded; consequently every supernatural incident is a myth. In the next place, Jesus having been conceived of as the Messiah, it was inevitable that representations should be made of him in accordance with the Hebrew notions of the Messiah. Therefore all representations of this class, though not supernatural, such as his birth in Bethlehem, his descent from David, his flight

into Egypt, may most appropriately be set down as myths. Then, again, his admirers would have been likely to attribute to him sayings and deeds corresponding with those of various distinguished persons in the Jewish history, and every portion of the narrative which bears any resemblance or analogy to any incident recorded in the Old Testament is accordingly mythical. But, on the other hand, Jesus was a Jew, confined within the circle of Jewish ideas, and not under any training or influences which could have enlarged that circle; consequently every alleged utterance of his, and every idea of his mission and character, that is broader and higher than the narrowest Judaism, is also mythical. We thus have an historical personage, of whom we are forbidden to believe, first, everything national, and then, everything extra-national. It is as if, in the life of Washington or John Adams, a critic should cast suspicion equally on all that he is alleged to have said or done as a loyal American, because he was one, and of course what appertained to one would be attributed to him; and on what he is alleged to have said or done from the impulse of a larger humanity, because, being an American, he could not have been anything more,—a style of criticism which, were it applied to any other than a sacred personage, would be regarded as too silly to need refutation. But this is not all. Though among secular historians of well-known periods there are discrepancies in minor details, and these are held to be mutual confirmations of the main facts, as showing so many independent authorities for them, every minute discrepancy in the Gospels casts just suspicion on the facts thus differently described by two or more of the Evangelists. This suspicion is extended even to the omission of very slight particulars, without any allowance for the different points of view which several independent witnesses must necessarily occupy, and the different portions of a prolonged transaction or discourse which would reach their eyes or ears, according as they were nearer or more remote, earlier or later on the ground, more or less absorbed in what was passing. All, therefore, in which the Evangelists vary from one another is mythical. But while their variance always indicates a myth, their very close agreement demands the same con-

struction; for where the several historians coincide circumstantially and verbally, they must have drawn from a common legendary source. Thus mutually inconsistent and contradictory are the tests applied to separate myth from fact. We are constantly reminded, in reading the "Criteria by which to distinguish the unhistorical in the Gospel narrative," of a passage in Goldsmith's *Essay on Mad Dogs*. "A crowd gather round a dog suspected of madness, and they begin by teasing the devoted animal on every side. If he attempts to stand on the defensive, and bite, then he is unanimously found guilty, for 'a mad dog always snaps at everything.' If, on the contrary, he strives to escape by running away, then he can expect no compassion, for 'mad dogs always run straight forward before them.'"

But there is one generalization which will embrace all Strauss's tests. Let the reader pass from chapter to chapter of each Gospel, and mark every deed and utterance of Jesus which illustrates either the divinity of his mission, his transcendent wisdom, or the exceeding loveliness of his spirit; he may thus make a full and accurate list of the myths recorded by the Evangelists.

Yet while Jesus is represented as in part an impostor, in part self-deluded, and his history in all its distinctive features is branded as utterly fictitious, strange to say, Strauss recognizes this history as symbolical of the moral history of mankind. What was false as to the individual, Jesus, is true of the race. Humanity is God manifest in the flesh, the child of the visible mother, Nature, and the invisible father, Spirit. It works miracles; for it subdues Nature in and around itself by the power of the Spirit. It is sinless; for pollution cleaves to the individual, and does not affect the race or its history. It dies, rises, and ascends to heaven; for the suppression of its personal and earthly mortality is a reunion with its father, Spirit. Faith in this metaphysical jargon is justifying and sanctifying Christian faith. Thus a history, which is the joint offspring of imposture and credulity, by some unexplained fortuity, resolves itself into a compend of true spiritual philosophy.

The system is one which it is hardly conceivable that any

person, except its author, should regard as a form of Christianity, or that any infidel of common sense should regard as a tenable form of infidelity. Its mischievous tendency results from the malign skill with which its author brings together all possible elements of sceptical criticism on the successive portions of the Gospel narrative. It covers so much ground, and with such minuteness of detail, that, while every individual part of the argument is weak, it presents a cumulative power which seems formidable, and could be answered only by a treatise equally minute and exhaustive in detail.

The mythical hypothesis rests on the assumption that miracles are impossible. But why? The power which established the order of Nature includes the power to suspend it, as the greater includes the less. If that order was established with a moral and spiritual purpose,—for the benefit of reasoning, accountable, and immortal beings,—and if that purpose may be essentially served by the suspension of proximate causes at any one period of human history, then we may expect to trace such an epoch in human history. All that is demanded, in order to make miracles credible, is the discovery of an adequate purpose and a justifying end. Such a purpose, such an end, is the development of the most noble and beautiful traits in human character and conduct. The question, then, is, Have miracles, or has a belief in miracles, borne any agency in the development of such traits? Let us try this issue.

Let the reader take in succession every period and division of authentic history, and write the names of all those persons who in moral excellence have stood confessedly pre-eminent,—Orientals, Greeks, Romans,—ancient, modern,—the lights of dark ages, the *élite* of the various schools of philosophy, the finished products of the highest civilization of every type,—reformers, philanthropists,—those who have adorned the loftiest stations, and those who have made the lowliest stations illustrious. • Then let him copy these names in two columns, writing in one column the Christians, in the other all the rest. He will find that he has made a horizontal division, the least name in the Christian column being greater than the greatest

out of it. From Paul, Peter, and John, — from Xavier, Fénelon, Boyle, Doddridge, Martyn, Heber, Judson, Channing, men whose genius and culture conspired with their piety to make them eminent, down to the unlettered Bedford tinker, the poor cobbler John Pounds, the dairyman's daughter with just education enough to read her Bible and to know the will of her Lord, — we find in all thoroughly developed Christians traits of character, which in part are wholly unshared, in part but remotely approached, by the best persons outside of the Christian pale.

Now, when we look into the forming processes and elements of these Christian characters, we perceive that the miracles of the New Testament hold a prominent place. Among the naturalists, rationalists, and Straussians who have assumed the Christian name, while there have been persons of merit and reputation, we think ourselves justified in saying that there has not yet appeared one whose illustrious virtue, piety, and self-sacrifice would demand for him a rank among the pre-eminently good. Nor is it easy to imagine in the Straussian system an adequate inspiration or motive for high spiritual endeavors or attainments. We cannot conceive of Paul as compassing sea and land, laying bare his back to the smiter, reaching after the crown of martyrdom, to defend a mythical resurrection and ascension of humanity. We cannot think of Martyn or Judson as turning away from all the immunities of civilized life, and courting sufferings and hardships a hundredfold worse than death, to substitute one set of myths for another in the minds of Pagans. We cannot imagine Strauss's *Life of Jesus* as taking the place of Matthew's or John's in the hands of the tinker or the servant-girl, making obscure scenes and callings in life radiantly beautiful, and heralding the triumphant deaths of which we have such frequent record in the annals of the poor. In the characters of such Christians as have left us their finished testimony, the miracles of the evangelic narrative have borne an essential part. These holy men and women have been guided and sustained in virtue by the authority of a divinely commissioned lawgiver, whose words they have received because he had been proclaimed and attested as the Son of God by peculiar manifestations of "power

from on high." They have followed his example step by step, and transcribed his features trait by trait, because they believed him sinless and perfect. They have placed implicit faith and trust in his teachings, because the works which God wrought through him bore witness of him. They have had a working faith in immortality, such a faith as no reasoning, or analogy, or instinct could have given them, because they have stood in thought by the bier at the gate of Nain and by the tomb of Bethany, have seen the light that streams from the broken sepulchre of the Crucified, and heard the voice of the resurrection-angel. St. Paul but gives utterance to the universal sentiment of such Christians as have done the highest honor to their name and their Master, when he says, "If Christ be not risen, our faith is vain."

The argument which we would urge from the undoubted facts we have cited is this:—If the development of the highest style of human character be a purpose worthy of man's God and Father, and if a belief in miracles has actually borne an essential part in the development of this style of character, then are miracles not only possible, but intrinsically probable. This is an argument which certainly must remain unimpeached, till Straussianism shall have furnished at least a few illustrious exemplars of goodness,—model men whom we can place by the side of those that have been formed by the common faith of Christendom.

Miracle, clearly lying as it does within the scope of Omnipotence, needs only the assertion of honest and competent witnesses to make it credible. Human testimony is, indeed, relied on to prove the unbroken order of nature; but it proves no such thing. We can follow back no line of testimony, which does not reach a miraculous epoch. Nay, if there be any one element of human nature which is universal, with exceptions as rare as idiocy or insanity, it is the appetency for miracle,—the tendency to believe events aside from the common course of nature. So strong is this, that many of the arch-infidels of modern times have been the prey of puerile superstitions; and in our own day none are so ready to receive the drivellings of hyper-electrified women as utterances from departed spirits, and to accept with omnivorous credulity

the absurdities of the newest form of necromancy, as those who set aside the simple, glorious miracles of the New Testament, and cast contempt on the risen Saviour. Now, as God furnishes for every instinctive craving of human nature an adequate and healthy supply, we believe that he has met the native craving for miracle, which will find its food somewhere and somehow, by authentic voices from the spirit-realm, by authentic glimpses from behind the veil of sense, by authentic forth-reachings of the Almighty arm from beneath the involucre of proximate causes.

We pass to another line of argument. Strauss, as we have said, denies the possibility of miracles, and maintains the uniformity of the law of causation in all times, both in the material and the intellectual universe, so that no intellectual phenomenon can make its appearance except under causes and conditions adapted to bring it into being. Myths, therefore, cannot originate, except from causes and under conditions favorable to their birth and growth. Now if we examine the undoubted myths connected with the history and religion of various nations, we shall find that they had their origin prior to the era of written literature; that their nucleus is to be sought in historical personages and events of a very early date; that they grew into fantastic forms and vast proportions by their transmission from tongue to tongue, whether in story or in song; that their discrepancies were the result of oral tradition through different channels, as in the separate states of Greece, and the aboriginal tribes or pre-historical colonists of Italy; and that they ceased to receive essential additions or modifications after the establishment of a national literature. Thus the latest of the gods, demigods, and wonder-working heroes of Grecian fable — such of them as ever lived — lived seven centuries before the time of Herodotus, and not less than four centuries before Hesiod and Homer; the various accounts we have of them appear to have been extant before the earliest period of Greek literature; nor have we proof of the origin of any complex or extended myth after that period, or any instance of a mythical personage who lived after that period. The case is similar with the distinctly Roman myths and the mythical portions of Roman history, which bear a

date anterior to the age of the written history and literature of Rome. The mythical and the historical periods of all nations are entirely distinct, the one from the other. Now the Christian era lies far within the historical period. Isolated prodigies are indeed related in the history of that age, and they occasionally occur in modern history ; but the leading incidents of individual lives and the successive stages of individual transactions are related with the same literalness with which the history of the last century is written. Yet, had the conditions for the growth of myths existed, there were not wanting personages of that era whose vast ability, extended fame, and wonderful experiences would have made them mythical. It is hardly possible that there could have been a richer supply of materials for myths in the life of Hercules, Cadmus, or Medea, than in that of Julius Cæsar, Mark Antony, or Cleopatra.

Nor can it be maintained that in this respect Judæa belonged to an earlier and more primitive period than Rome or Egypt. Josephus was born not far from the date of the death of Jesus Christ, and wrote nearly at the time assigned by Strauss for the composition of our canonical Gospels. In addition to what we believe to have been the miracles of the Old Testament, he records many undoubted myths of the early Hebrew ages ; but his history of his own times, with now and then a touch of the marvellous, is for the most part a record of unquestionable facts, and in this respect will bear a favorable comparison with the accounts of the same epoch which have come down to us from the Roman historians. In fine, there was nothing in the condition of that age, more than in that of our own, which could give rise or currency to a mythical history.

Moreover, myths are vague, dateless, incoherent, dreamy, poetical, while the Gospel narratives are eminently prosaic and circumstantial, connected with the names and biographical anecdotes of numerous persons, and with the frequent designations of places and dates. The genealogies given by Matthew and Luke are represented by Strauss as mythical ; yet nothing could be more opposed to our idea of a myth, and to the character of the acknowledged myths of antiquity, than

such catalogues of names. The two genealogies may, for aught we can say to the contrary, be both authentic; for Matthew professes to give the natural and actual pedigree of Joseph; while, as we are inclined to translate the word employed by Luke in introducing his table (*ἐνομιζέτο*), he records the legal genealogy, which, as every one conversant with Jewish customs knows, might vary very widely from the natural. But, even were we to admit the alleged inconsistency of the two, they both bear incontestable marks of having been copied from existing documents, and not imagined or invented.

All through the Gospels we find, in close connection with the miracles of Christ, details of common Jewish life, often so minute and trivial that they would have been altogether below the aim of ambitious fiction or tumid fancy, and could have found a place in the narrative only because they actually occurred. The miracles are not in a setting of their own kind, as they would have been in a fictitious narrative. They are imbedded in a singularly natural and life-like, humble and unpretending history. The style of the Evangelists is not that of men who either wondered themselves, or expected their readers to wonder, at what they related; but it is the unambitious style of men who expected to be believed, and who were personally familiar with the events they described. If we, born and bred on the level sea-coast of New England, were to write about Swiss scenery, it would be with a glowing pen, in burning words, in a style bearing constant evidence of the novelty of the theme and the intensity of our own enthusiasm; while a Swiss mountaineer would write about glaciers and avalanches, snow-crowned summits and gorgeous elemental phenomena, as coldly and dispassionately as we should about the common features of our native scenery. In like manner, men who had never been conversant with miracles, if they had described them from rumor or from fancy, must have written about them in an intense and inflated style, with magnifying epithets, with warm appeals to the sentiment of the marvellous, with frequent exclamations of wonder, not unmixed with the show of argument to convince the incredulous. When we find, on the other hand, not a ripple of swollen diction on the current of the Evangelic story, not a deviation from the

quiet, prosaic, circumstantial course of narrative, in describing such events as the walking on the sea, the raising of Lazarus, or the ascension of Jesus to heaven, we can account for this unique phenomenon in literature only by supposing that the writers had become so familiar with the supernatural that it had ceased to excite their amazement.

Another conclusive argument against the mythical theory is derived from the sufferings and the martyrdom of the early Christians. At the time which Strauss assigns for the origin of our Gospels, there were still living very many of the contemporaries of Jesus, who had ample means of ascertaining the truth with regard to his history. Fable which involved no serious consequences to those who received it might have passed unquestioned, and might have been devoured by large numbers with easy credulity. But men are not wont to stake ease, honor, fortune, and life on stories which they have the means of testing, without looking carefully into the evidence of their truth. Now no fact in ancient or modern history is more certain, than that, within half a century from the death of Christ, a large number of persons, many of them natives of Judæa, suffered the severest persecution, and incurred violent and ignominious death by fire, by crucifixion, and by exposure to wild beasts, solely for their belief in the specially divine mission, the miracles, and the resurrection of Jesus. Not a few of these persons were men of superior intelligence and cultivation. They must have known how far what they believed to be facts were confirmed by eyewitnesses, and how far and on what grounds they were called in question. They lived at a time when they could have examined the evidence for and against these alleged facts, and they must have been more or less than men if they threw away their lives for mere exaggerations or fables.

The genuineness of most of Paul's Epistles, and the fact of his protracted sacrifices and sufferings and his final martyrdom, are not called in question even by Strauss and the sceptics of his school. Paul's Epistles evince him to have been a man of eminent power and culture,—in our regard the greatest man God ever made, and to every intelligent mind far above mediocrity. Born a Jew, brought up at Jerusalem,

familiar with the alleged scenes and witnesses of Christ's miracles, at first a persecutor of the infant Church, he could have become a believer and champion of the Christian faith only on strong evidence, and after a full examination of the grounds for unbelief and doubt. We have his own statement of what he believed, and especially of his unquestioning faith in the resurrection of Jesus. No man's testimony could be worth more than his, and certainly no testimony could be more explicit and positive than his is as to the authenticity of the leading facts in the Gospel history. But we must multiply his testimony by hundreds, nay, by thousands, in order to appreciate the full amount of attestation given to these facts by the sacrifice, suffering, and martyrdom of those who lived within the period and the range of trustworthy evidence in the premises, and whose worldly interests were all opposed to their faith. We certainly are authorized to cite this entire array of confessors and martyrs as believers in the miracles of Christ; for even Strauss could not contend that they suffered and died for what they knew or supposed to be myths. There is that in their testimony which renders even the authorship of the Gospels a question of secondary importance. We doubt not that they were written by the men whose names they bear, and three of them, at least, at an earlier date than that assigned by Strauss. But, if possible, they might seem more authentic if written anonymously and at a later period; for in this case they embody narratives which bear the sure seal of martyr blood from a cloud of witnesses, and are thus not the mere story of the individual writers, but the story of the whole Church.

The moral character of the primitive Christians is also an impregnable argument for the truth of the Gospel history. There is no room for doubt, that with Christ commenced the regeneration of humanity. Virtues which hardly had a name before sprang into being. Vices which had been embalmed in song and were cherished in the heart of the highest civilization of the Roman Empire were denounced and condemned. A loftier ethical standard than had been imagined before — a standard which has not yet been improved upon — was announced by the earliest Christian writers, and recognized in

all the Christian communities. There were in the Church of the first century types of character which have never been surpassed, hardly equalled, since. According to Strauss there are no uncaused effects,—no effects which have not causes fully commensurate with themselves. A Jewish youth, half impostor and half enthusiast, must have been immeasurably inferior to those philosophers and moralists of classic antiquity, who hardly made an impression on the depravity of their times, and whose influence was, at the most, confined within very narrow limits. Such a youth must have had strangely incoherent notions of morality, and must have presented but a mixed and faulty example of excellence. He might have founded a sect of fanatics, but not a body of signally pure, true, and holy men. There is a glaring inadequacy, nay, an entire and irreconcilable discrepancy, between the alleged cause and the known effect. We can account for the moral renovation that followed the ministry of Christ only by supposing him endowed with a loftier and calmer wisdom, a profounder sense of truth and right, and a more commanding influence over the human heart and conscience, than ever belonged to any son of man beside. But whence this superiority? Outwardly he was an humbly born, illiterate Jew, in a degenerate age, of a corrupt national stock, “a root out of a dry ground”; and the problem of his pre-eminence over all other teachers of truth and duty is wholly incapable of solution, unless we believe that he held by the gift of God a pre-eminence, of which his sway over nature and his victory over death were but the natural and fitting expression.

Strauss bases his theory, as we have said, on the assumption that our Gospels were not written by the men whose names they bear. But, in point of fact, there is more abundant proof of the authorship of those books by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, than there is of the authorship of the *Æneid* by Virgil, or the *De Officiis* by Cicero. In the earlier ages the composition of the Gospels by their reputed writers was never denied or called in question, not even by those heretics who rejected some of them, or repudiated portions of their contents, on dogmatical grounds,—not even by Jewish and Gentile opposers of Christianity, who argued vehemently and bitterly against

the religion without impugning the genuineness of its records. Justin Martyr, who wrote about the middle of the second century, speaks repeatedly of Memoirs composed by the Apostles, called Gospels, and in his works there are numerous coincidences, not only in substance, but in words and in passages of considerable length, with our Gospels. He was a man of singularly inquisitive mind, educated successively in the Stoic, Peripatetic, and Platonistic philosophies, and of vast and varied erudition; and it is impossible that he should not have known whether these books were received without suspicion, or whether they rested under the imputation of spurious authorship. Irenæus, who wrote a little later, gives a detailed description of our four Gospels, designates their respective authors, and states the order in which, and the circumstances under which, they were respectively composed; and he writes thus, not in his own name alone, but in that of the whole Church, expressly saying that the genuineness of these books was not, and had never been, disputed by any. About the same time Celsus wrote against Christianity, and he quoted so largely from our Gospels as authorized narratives of the life of Christ, that a continuous biography of the Saviour might be well-nigh reconstructed from the fragments of his writings that have been preserved. These are but specimens of numerous similar authorities which might be cited.

Moreover, in the middle of the second century there were large bodies of Christians in every part of the civilized world, and the copies of the Gospels in circulation must have been numbered by many thousands. Their universal reception as the works of the men whose names they bear, can be accounted for only by their genuineness. Suppose them spurious, yet written and circulated under the names now attached to them in the lifetime of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, it is impossible that they should not have openly denied their authorship, and that this denial should not have left traces of itself in the days of Justin Martyr and Irenæus. Suppose them first published under the names of their reputed authors, after the death of those authors, it would have been asked why these books did not make their appearance while the writers were living, and their late publication must have given rise to

doubts and questions which could not have been quieted for several generations. Suppose them to have been at the outset published anonymously, there must have been a time when the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were first attached to them, and it is impossible that the attaching of the names of distinguished men to books which had been anonymous should not have been attended by grave doubt.

Again, the statement of Luke, and the very nature of the case, render it certain that numerous other accounts of the life of Christ, more or less authentic, were early written, and some such accounts, commonly called the Apocryphal Gospels, are still extant. But we have ample evidence that none of these writings were ever received as of authority, read in the churches, or sanctioned by the office-bearers and leading men of the Christian communities; and most of them disappeared at an early date. Now it is impossible to account for the discrediting and suppression of these writings, unless the Church were in possession of authoritative records. If our Gospels had no higher basis of authority than those narratives had, all the friendly narratives of the life of Jesus would have been received and transmitted with equal credit. But if there were four narratives written by eyewitnesses and their accredited associates, while all the others were written by persons unknown, or known to be possessed of inferior means of information, then we may account, as in no other way we can, for the admitted fact that these four Gospels crowded all others out of the Church, and drove them into disrepute, and almost into oblivion.

There are various other aspects in which, did our space and leisure permit, we should be glad to exhibit the mythical theory. But we must pass to the fulfilment of a purpose held in view in the inception of this article, namely, the criticism of the books whose titles, together with that of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, stand as our text.

As to Hase's work, we wish that it were either better or worse. We have no doubt that in Germany it has met an actual want, and has been among the agencies in the revival of faith in positive Christianity. It is to be commended for the simplicity and completeness of its arrangement, and we should

also say for the perspicuity of its style, had not Mr. Clarke, by quoting a German sentence than which nothing could be more involved and unwieldy, led us to suppose that for this merit, so difficult to be imagined in a German book, we are indebted chiefly to the well-known skill and taste of the translator. As a syllabus of subjects, and an index of points open for discussion, it would be of great value to a critical student of the New Testament, especially in suggesting questions which it does not satisfactorily answer, and in dropping such seeds of thought as require an educated and reflecting mind for their germination. But as an interpretation of the life of Jesus, either from the stand-point of the Apostles, or from that of the Christian consciousness of our own day, it is utterly defective. The author starts, as does Strauss, with his own theory of Christ, with *a priori* notions of what the Gospels must contain; and his aim is not to determine what the Evangelists meant to relate, but to mould their representations into conformity with his own ideal of the Christ. He admits the supernatural element in the Gospels, but subordinates it to his own æsthetic sense, and, wherever a miracle seems to him superfluous or in bad taste, he sets it aside. His own point of view is a very low humanitarianism; and, though he is perfectly reverent throughout, (and this we have cause to commemorate with gratitude in an age when professedly Christian works so often abound in blasphemy,) we have not detected, as Mr. Clarke has, the "warm heart of love throbbing beneath." On the other hand, the book seems to us stone-cold. Of the translator's part in the work we would speak in the highest praise; and perhaps we might express ourselves in more laudatory terms as to Hase's labors on the Gospels, had we not tacitly taken Neander's Life of Christ as our standard of comparison. The main difference between the two works is, that the one is an exposition of the Gospel according to the Evangelists, the other is a new Gospel according to Hase.

Dr. Turnbull's "Christ in History" connects itself with the main subject of this article by an admirably written chapter on the Mythic Theory. The central thought of the work might not be suggested to every mind by its title; yet we regard the title as eminently felicitous. The theophany which

was consummated in Jesus Christ, is the central light and force of human history. The Logos, which dwelt among men in his person, was always in the world, and reminiscences of its early revelations, illumining rays forcing their way from it through the penumbra of ignorance and depravity, and providential preparations for the time when it should become manifest in the flesh, may be traced, not in Judaism alone, but equally in all the ancient religions and philosophies. Since the Christian era, events have constantly shaped and grouped themselves with relation to Christianity, and the nations that can be properly called historical present themselves chiefly as auxiliary or antagonistic to its development, and as attesting its divinity and omnipotence, equally when yielding to its influence, or succumbing to the penalties of its violated law. As a treatise at once profoundly philosophic and reverently Christian, this work merits the warmest commendation, and will be most highly appreciated by the soundest minds and the most devout hearts.

The pervading spirit of Dr. Morison's Commentary is best expressed in the following sentence from his Introduction: "We must remember that, as students of the New Testament, one is our Master, even Christ, and that, as no want of faith can be an excuse for setting aside anything that he has taught, so neither should any preconceived opinions of ours, or creeds drawn up and established by human authority, stand as a barrier between his words and us." In accordance with this sentiment, the author's aim is to determine, not what the Evangelist and his Divine Master ought to have taught, but what they actually did teach. The volume before us is a careful, humble, believing, and revering interpretation of Matthew's record. There is no trace of adherence to a sect. On the other hand, the author, on several important points, such as the agency of evil spirits, diverges widely from the current opinions of the body of Christians to which he reputedly belongs. We are inclined to dissent from some of his conclusions; but we cannot express too strongly our admiration of his method. If we have indeed a divine revelation, our only rational course is that of lowly piety, the shaping of our convictions by its records, not the revision of its records

by our self-spun philosophy. The capacity for such a revision would render the revelation needless. Nor does any more or less strict theory of inspiration modify our office and duty as interpreters. If God has vouchsafed to become our instructor, there is no room for doubt that he has given us his instruction in an authentic form, in a form that demands our implicit credence. The plenary authority of the Gospels—their right to be believed—rests on no technical definition of the mode or measure in which their authors were inspired, but on the necessity of the case, on the only conditions under which alone a divine revelation could have been needed and given. For loyalty to the sacred record, freedom from party bias, the thoroughness with which the lights of philology, archæology, and parallel Scripture are concentrated on the first Gospel, and the conscientious exclusion of other than legitimate sources of illustration, we can safely commend the *Disquisitions and Notes on Matthew* to Christians of every name.

Of Dr. Hackett's work we expressed our high appreciation on its first appearance. Many of the illustrations are new, and those that are not so are virtually original, as they come to us confirmed by the actual observation of one second to no living Biblical critic in sound judgment, acute discernment, and ripe scholarship. This volume, by the weight and worth of its contents, merits a place on the table of every clergyman and student in theology; while its simplicity of style, its attractive form, and its moderate dimensions adapt it to the use of common readers, and render it invaluable as a manual for families and Sunday schools.